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# ENGINEER'S BOOKSHELF

## TACKLING TECH

**Tackling Tech.** By Lawrence W. Conant, S. B. Cloth binding, 197 pages. Price \$1.50. The Roland Press Co., New York. Reviewed by J. M. Weed.

**B**EFORE he has been long at college, the freshman engineer is liable to find that he has difficulty in keeping the proper balance between the time necessary for the proper attention to his studies and that devoted to other activities. Authoritative advice on that knotty problem is contained in *Tackling Tech*, by Lawrence W. Conant, a recent graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

*Tackling Tech* is a treatment of a new theme, its title is one which will attract the kind of men who are planning to take a technical course, and the advice which it contains is fundamentally sound. The book is to the neophyte at a technical school what the books of etiquette are to the socially uninformed. All the minutiae of preparing for a technical education, getting settled, learning to study, passing examinations, planning time, and choosing a proper environment in the way of selection of books, newspapers, and movies are treated in definite form and are made readily accessible by means of a detailed table of contents. For this information alone the book is a valuable aid for the prospective engineer or for the freshman who wants to get started in the proper manner. Also, unless the sophomore is hardened beyond redemption, he may read *Tackling Tech* with pleasure and profit.

One feature which may not be liked by some is the one which may make a special appeal to others: the extreme detail. The student is not required to do much thinking for himself; he loses the opportunity of being the "goat" before he has learned the ropes. The "system", too, while it may be of great value to some students, might prove a positive detriment to others. By "system" is meant the merciless accounting for every cent and every minute. The spendthrift, either of time or money, may be turned from the error of his ways by this rigid checking up, but since the man who is fitted for engineering is usually rather methodical in his habits—or becomes so after he has pursued the engineering studies for a year or so—the better class of students may find system an unnecessary bore. It is worth trying, however, and may surprise those who think that their work has been most efficient. The thing in particular to be avoided is the old pitfall of the efficiency expert, spending too much time on the system.

The advice on attitude toward the work and toward engineering and life in general, while good, is more or less of a platitudinous nature, and probably will fail to make the impression that such material makes when discussed by a wise father or a venerable dean. In cases where proper parental advice is not adequate, this part of the book may be very helpful. The book may well supplement courses in the fundamentals of

engineering which are given at most technical schools.

There is much more in the book; in fact, nearly all the problems of the young student seem to have been anticipated. Taken on its merits, *Tackling Tech* may be said to be a valuable contribution to the literature of engineering education.

## A STORY AND A PANACEA

**The Haunted Bookshop.** By Christopher Morley. Published by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, 1922. Price: very low for professional advice of such a high order.

Reviewed by D. C. Sprau, '20.

After one has been reading representative books of the present, he is gratified to find in Christopher Morley's "The Haunted Bookshop" a narrative that is different, both in style and plot.

In "The Haunted Bookshop" the author has aimed to bring before his reader a number of varied and worthwhile books, many of which are quoted from, or whose themes are explained, in application to present-day events. The books are always worthy of the time and attention of practically all readers. The claim is not made, however, that all people need certain good books. The bookseller, Roger Mifflin, is "a specialist in adjusting the book to the human need." His professional methods are interesting. "Between ourselves," he says, "there is no such thing, abstractly, as a 'good' book. A book is 'good' only when it meets some human hunger or refutes some human error. A book that is good for me would very likely be 'punk' for you. My pleasure is to prescribe books for such patients as drop in here and are willing to tell me their symptoms. Some people have let their reading faculties decay so that all I can do is to hold a *post mortem* on them. But most are still open to treatment. There is no one so grateful as the man to whom you have given just the book his soul needed and he never knew it. No advertisement on earth is as potent as a grateful customer."

Mr. Morley has, in his peculiar and yet effective way, pointed out his ideas of present-day world ailments, and in most cases puts forth a plausible remedy or even a cure for the evils. The story is as thrilling as the title; one sees in the cleverly-laid plot of the German druggist, a member of the German secret service, an effort to put anything in the way of accomplishing of the signing of the peace treaty at Versailles, even an attempt to take the life of our chief executive. The adventures of the young advertising man, Aubrey Gilbert, who, mainly by chance, stumbles upon some of the spy's cunning plans, are both amusing and interesting.

Titania Chapman is a real heroine. Her growing attachment for Aubrey, her sudden dislike of him, and the final reconciliation provide the thread of love which is woven in the tale of the gentle-mannered bookseller's victory over the underhand methods of the German spy system.

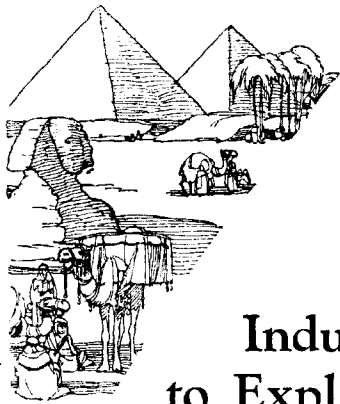
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## ENGINEER'S BOOKSHELF

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The bookseller's letter to his brother, in which he discusses our world of today from many angles, is a distinctive bit of writing. One is well pleased with Roger's delightful manner of treating the different subjects; he has such sane and wholesome views that we feel that the letter is what we have all felt but have been unable to put into concrete form. The tone of the letter is so friendly, so cordial, so full of real interest in the person to whom it is addressed, that it may be considered a model worthy of imitation by anyone who would write delightful letters of friendship.

This letter is only one of the many pleasant



## What Industry Owes to Explosives Power

**T**HE ENGINEERS who built the pyramids of Egypt and dug the canals of Babylon did not have to consider costs.

The modern engineer strives for more and better work at lower expense—and he must consider economy as well as accomplishment.

The economical production and distribution of wealth are made possible today through the use of explosives. And the enormous consumption of explosives throughout the world is an index of the influence they exert in our economic life.

The du Pont Company produces 120 million pounds of dynamite and from 85 to 100 million pounds of blasting powder a year. Twenty-four du Pont mills are scattered over the country at strategic points for better service to our industry. Five research laboratories are maintained for constant improvement of the product. An expert technical field staff offers counsel in employing the most scientific blasting practice.

And while du Pont is the largest single manufacturer of explosives and is the leader in the industry, this company makes only about one-third of the total quantity consumed in the United States.

The history of the du Pont Company is the history of explosives evolution. Du Pont has been privileged to lead the way in the development of explosives power.

**E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS & CO., Inc.**  
Explosives Department, Wilmington, Delaware



things in the book. The characters are everyday Americans, yet all are interesting. Mr. Miffin is a philosopher, but human; human even to raiding the icebox just before going to bed. And the dog—of course there must be a dog in a Morley story—is really a hero. The manner of writing is chatty and at times confidential—the author is imparting secrets to us. The book is altogether pleasant and stimulating.

### CONQUERING THE EARTH

Published by the HERCULES POWDER CO.,  
Wilmington, Del.

For some time the publishers of this book have been using in advertising illustrated historical incidents which show the contrast between ancient and modern engineering methods, and the immense advantages of the latter. These advertisements created a great deal of interest and the company received many letters asking for an elaboration of this material, in spite of the popular assumption that engineers have scant time and little desire for speculations outside their immediate daily problems. The company complied with this request and the result is the excellent volume named above.

"Conquering the Earth" consists of several advertisements of the firm which have appeared in various periodicals in the past, together with a fairly detailed account of the historical facts on which they are based. The building of the Pyramids of Gizeh, for instance, is well told. The method of quarrying the stone by driving wooden wedges into a small crack in the stone and pouring water on them to expand them, is compared to the relative ease of the operation by use of modern explosives. The fact is emphasized that the cost of such wasteful construction would paralyze the industry of today. The pyramids would never have been built if the Egyptian kings had not had almost unlimited wealth, time, and man power at their disposal.

The incidents are by no means confined to the antique. In the last pages is an account of the times when it was forbidden by royal proclamation to burn coal in London. Such an offense was punished by hanging or imprisonment. This was because there was no other coal to be had at that period but the soft and crumbly "sea coale," which was picked from the outcrops, and which made a dense, dirty smoke when burned. With the coming of explosives, better grades of coal were produced which did not produce such offensive by-products, and this startling law was repealed.

Anybody desiring a copy may obtain one by writing to the advertising department of the Hercules Powder Company, Wilmington, Delaware, enclosing—nothing!